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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 000451

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2016
TAGS: EPET PGOV ASEC PTER CASC NI HOSTAGES
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 33 - HOSTAGES
RELEASED

REF: LAGOS 438

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

¶1. (C) The remaining three Willbros and Control Risk Group hostages were released early this morning, and are in good physical condition according to preliminary medical examination. The trio are currently in Lagos. AmCits Cody Oswalt and Russell Spell will be departing Nigeria tonight for the United States. UK national John Hudspith will leave tomorrow.

¶2. (C) After their release, the hostages were taken to the State Security Service headquarters in Warri for a debrief which lasted roughly one hour. A formal release ceremony and press briefing at the Governor's Warri compound followed. The briefing concluded at approximately 5:00 a.m. The Consul General, FEST officers and Conoff have seen and spoken with the former hostages, who were medically examined by a doctor at the Shell clinic in Warri this morning. All three former hostages have contacted their families.

¶3. (C) A Shell plane transported the hostages, accompanied by FEST officers and Conoff, from Warri to Lagos at approximately 11:10 am local time. They were transported to the Willbros compound, where they will rest prior to their flights home tonight. Legatt is conducting a limited debrief of the former hostages at the Willbros compound.

¶4. (C/NF) According to one of the hostages, the kidnappers said they were being released as a sign of good will in the lead up to a purported March 29 meeting with the GON about conditions in the Niger Delta.

¶5. (SBU) Current plans called for Cody Oswalt and Russell Spell to transit Paris to Houston. Given the possibility of an airline strike in Paris tomorrow that could delay flights up to 2 days, Willbros is currently working on an alternate plan. We will update the Department and transit country Embassies once the rerouting has been finalized.

BROWNE